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Message Text

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12
ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 L-03 EB-07 COME-00 INT-05

IO-13 /071 W
---------- 055921
R 090922Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1448

UNCLAS TOKYO 11952

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TEN, XV, JA
SUBJECT: REVISION OF JAPANESE POLICY TOWARDS ANTARTICA?

REF: TOKYO A-108

SUMMARY: A RECENT SERIES OF ARTICLES IN THE JAPANESE PRESS, BOTH ENGLISH AND VERNACULAR, HAVE ONCE AGAIN "ANNOUNCED" A SHIFT IN GOJ POLICY TOWARDS RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE ANTARCTIC. THE PRESS REPORTS CLAIM THAT THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE AND THAT THE MINISTRYOF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI) WILL BECOME INVOLVED IN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. GOJ CONTACTS DENY THAT THE ARTICLES ARE FACTUAL AND CLAIM THAT NO CHANGE IN POLICY HAS OCCURRED. END SUMMARY.

1. ALMOST ALL OF THE TOKYO PAPERS DURING THE PAST WEEK HAVE RUN ARTICLES REPORTING A SHIFT IN GOJ POLICY TOWARDS RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT IN ANTARCTICA. THE STORIES CLAIM MINISTER OF EDUCATION MICHIO NAGAI WILL MEET WITH MITI MINISTER KOMOTO AND FOREIGN MINISTER MIYAZAWA TO IRON OUT THE DETAILS OF SUCH AS A POLICY SHIFT. THE STORIES GO ON TO CITE THE SUPPOSED EXISTENCE OF NATURAL GAS AND PETROLEUM DEPOSITS AS A MAJOR REASON FOR THE CHANGE.

2. EMBOFF SPOKE WITH MOE OFFICIAL KATSUYOSHI HAGA WHO SAID THAT THE NEWS REPORTS WERE INACCURATE AND MISLEADING. HE
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CLAIMED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN GOJ POLICY ON THIS

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MATTER AND THAT NONE WAS CONTEMPLATED. THE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE GOJ WILL BEGIN TO LOOK INTO RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN ANTARCTICA IN THE FUTURE BUT THAT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WOULD STILL BE THE PRIMARY JAPANESE INTEREST THERE. HE DID NOT OFFER AN OPINION ON THE SOURCE OF THE PRESS REPORTS.

COMMENT: THE RECURRENCE OF THESE ARTICLES (WHICH ARE BASICALLY IDENTICAL TO THOSE OF LAST MARCH) MAY BE A REACTION BY THE SPECULATIVE PRESS TO THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. OTHER THAN THESE ARTICLES, THE EMBASSY HAS HAD NO INDICATION THAT THE GOJ IS UNDERTAKING A NEW POLICY WITH REGARD TO ANTARCTICA.
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